

TOEFL Junior : Reading Comprehension Test 2

Read the passage . 60 - 100 minutes

Nobel Prize in Chemistry

Marie Curie was one of the most accomplished scientists in history. Together with her husband, Pierre, she discovered radium, an element widely used for treating cancer, and studied uranium and other radioactive substances. Pierre and Marie's amicable collaboration later helped to unlock the secrets of the atom.

Marie was born in 1867 in Warsaw, Poland, where her father was a professor of physics. At an early age, she displayed a brilliant mind and a blithe personality. Her great exuberance for learning prompted her to continue with her studies after high school. She became disgruntled, however, when she learned that the university in Warsaw was closed to women. Determined to receive a higher education, she defiantly left Poland and in 1891 entered the Sorbonne, a French university, where she earned her master's degree and doctorate in physics.

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the world-famous university. In 1911 she received the Nobel Prize in chemistry for isolating radium. Although Marie Curie eventually suffered a fatal illness from her long exposure to radium, she never became disillusioned about her work. Regardless of the consequences, she had dedicated herself to science and to revealing the mysteries of the physical world.

INSTRUCTION:

Read the questions carefully and refer to the text above then choose the best answer:

1. The Curies' _____ collaboration helped to unlock the secrets of the atom.

- A. friendly
- B. competitive
- C. courteous
- D. industrious
- E. chemistry

2. Marie had a bright mind and a _____ personality.

- A. strong
- B. lighthearted
- C. humorous
- D. strange
- F. envious

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- B. showed intelligence
- C. behaved
- D. was distressed
- E. Answer not available

5. _____ she remembered their joy together.

- A. Dejectedly
- B. Worried
- C. Tearfully
- D. Happily
- E. Irefully

6. Her _____ began to fade when she returned to the Sorbonne to succeed her husband.

- A. misfortune
- B. anger
- C. wretchedness
- D. disappointment
- E. ambition

7. Even though she became fatally ill from working with radium, Marie Curie was never _____.

- A. troubled
- B. worried
- C. disappointed
- D. sorrowful
- E. disturbed

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Answers and Explanations

1. **A:** "Amicable" means friendly. It does not mean competitive (B), i.e. oppositional, ambitious, or aggressive; courteous (C), i.e. polite; industrious (D), i.e. hard-working; or chemistry (E): their collaboration was in physics, but moreover, the passage specifically describes their collaboration as "amicable."
2. **B:** "Blithe" means light-hearted. It does not mean strong (A), humorous (B) or funny; strange (D), or envious (E).
3. **B:** "Disgruntled" means annoyed. It does not mean hopeless (A), depressed (C), or worried (D).
4. **A:** Marie challenged authority by going to study at the Sorbonne, because Warsaw's university did not admit women. The passage indicates this challenge by describing her "defiantly" leaving Poland for France; i.e., she was defying authority. The passage does not

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from desolation. Disappointment (D) is also different from desolation, meaning feeling let-down rather than hopeless. Ambition (E) is drive to succeed or accomplish things. It was not Curie's ambition that faded upon returning to the Sorbonne but her depression.

7. **C:** "Disillusioned" means disappointed. It does not mean troubled (A), i.e. concerned or disturbed; worried (B) or anxious; sorrowful (D) or sad; or disturbed (E).